



[\[Print\]](#) [\[Close\]](#)

Missouri Market boasts 100 "bests" for lucky 13

Janice Denham
Of the Suburban Journals

Wednesday, Sep. 29 2004

The "best" rise to the surface again and again. The 13th Annual Best of Missouri Market this weekend is evidence.

More than 100 outstanding Missouri food producers and artisans will step into the spotlight with products they baked, cooked, simmered, planted, harvested, painted, decorated, spun, hammered or however else they shaped them to fit under large tents at the Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw Blvd. in St. Louis.

The market, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday (Oct. 2 and 3), benefits the Garden. Everyone attending enjoys full use of the grounds and a special Kids Corner, with activities such as pumpkin painting and cow milking for the entire family.

Chef David Hahn of Straub's Markets will conduct food demonstrations at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday. The classes, with tips and recipes for easy holiday entertaining, will be held at the Kemper Center for Home Gardening.

The market showcases previous favorites as well as promising foods for 2004.

Standards such as Fitz's root beer and Ronoco coffee will continue to whet market-goers' whistles as they seek out the best of this year's crop. Under Florence's HomeStyle ChaCha label, Joyce Marks and her sisters will serve up their low-carb, low-fat salsa on chips and in other dishes.

This is the 12th year Williams Brothers Meat Market and Thompson Farms have brought their specialties.

Foods new to the market this year range from old-fashioned cookies to Snapping Turtle candy, salsa and hot dog sauce to Greek and Italian sausage.

From Manzo's Kitchen will come Mom's Italian meatballs, Greek loukanika sausage, Tuscan-style salsiccia and olivi schiaccati (cracked olive salad).

Pete Manzo joined his older brother, Paul, in their parents' food import business when their father, Pietro, died in 1998. Their mother, Brigida Manzo, comes by sometimes.

"She pops in now to keep us in line," Pete said. "Like a good Italian mom, she cooks and cooks, then feeds us when she comes."

Their parents immigrated from Sicily with a taste for foods local people would enjoy. The kitchen at 5346 Devonshire Ave. in south St. Louis with a retail display was a spin-off two years ago.

"My dad came and worked here first," Pete said. "It's a wonderful love story that brings tears to your eyes. He sent my mother money, which she stockpiled."

Her "secret stash" eventually supplemented the wages her husband made working two jobs, and the family import business was born.

Five or six variations of handmade salsiccia provide ballast for the business.

Other specialties include Mamma Manzo's meatballs, a blend of ground beef and pork, egg, cheese and spices; Italian burgers, made mostly with beef, a little pork, fresh Italian spices and cheese, and their dad's recipe for hand-cracked olive salad, which marinates at least three weeks for savory success.

"I'm the type who gets creative because I get bored," Pete said.

As a result, Tuscan salsiccia is being unveiled for the Missouri Market. The traditional sausage is blended with sun-dried tomato, provolone cheese and pepperoncini peppers.

"It's not hot, but gives a little zing when you get to the pepperoncini," he said.

Another specialty they offer is Greek loukanika, with garlic, wine and a hint of orange peel. The Manzos inherited the recipe from a neighbor who entrusted them with her recipe.

Pete and Paul will donate some proceeds from sales at the Missouri Market to the American Cancer Society in memory of their father. Shoppers can buy sausage and leave it in the freezer to pick up after checking out other market booths.

With an eye to cuisine closer to home, Randy and Janet Southmayd will bring plenty of Randy's Famous Salsa.

"I've been making salsa just for myself for 20 years," Randy said. "First I started mixing products together that you could buy. Then I started making it from scratch."

He began the process as a student at Hazelwood Central High School. Southmayd seriously tweaked its flavors after college. When friends would have a big party, he would mix up three or four gallons of it. He has used the same recipe for the last eight years.

"Friends can never seem to get enough of it," Southmayd said.

Randy's Famous Salsa comes in two varieties – sweet and mild and sweet and sassy.

"Sweet and sassy has a much heartier kick that comes in layers," he said. "First, they experience the sweetness, then they get an aftertaste of peppers. Also, it's kind of creamy, so the salsa sticks to the chip, rather than being chunky, just real watery and runny."

Southmayd likes to use it for unique zing on spaghetti, in lasagna and in meatloaf. It out-sassed eight other salsas in a contest July 24 at the Waterloo Winery.

The salsa, in production for three months, is made from scratch with crushed tomato. Spices are added and it is cooked about 30 minutes before being jarred.

After keeping his "day job" as a manager of research and development at Boeing Co., Southmayd spends spare hours driving to fairs and promotions in a bright red truck with plenty of samples of his "famous" salsa.

Another start-up is Happy Dogs Hot Sauce, in its first year commercially. Patrick Gilmore of St. Ann was annoyed with cheap, bland products put out by national brands, yet thought the specialty brands were too extreme.

In an effort to bring out the best in habanero peppers, which he grew, he softened their heat in a flavorful sauce with kick.

The Very Best Cookies will come with several varieties, including its newly debuted oatmeal butterscotch.

Susan Martin and Cindy Stahl took over the cookie company in Webster Groves in February.

"We don't decorate or ice our cookies," Martin said. "We make homemade drop cookies like I would make at home."

They are made without preservatives, so they are meant to be eaten within a week or frozen.

The recipe for the Very Best Cookies is one the company shares. Sprinkled with cinnamon-sugar, it is known as Snickerdoodles. The bakery also tops the cookie with other colored sugars for individual holidays or events.

The Patty Cake Pals will supply the lingering aroma of cinnamon rolls. Joan Broyles and Shelly Williams offer the rolls with cream cheese icing or traditional glaze.

Admission to the Best of Missouri Market is \$8 for adults, \$6 for visitors 65 and older and \$3 for Garden members. Children 12 and under are admitted free.

Shuttles run continuously from Tower Grove Park, where parking is free. Information about the event is available by calling (314) 577-9400 or toll-free (800) 642-8842 or online at www.mobot.org.

MANZO'S SALSICCIA AND POTATO CASSEROLE

2 lb. Manzo's salsiccia sausage (any variety)

1 large onion, sliced

7 large potatoes, sliced

1 green bell pepper, seeded, sliced

Butter

Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Butter baking dish.

Layer potatoes, onion and green pepper in prepared dish. Place uncooked salsiccia on top in single layer. Cover dish with aluminum foil.

Bake in preheated oven 1 hour. Remove foil. Bake 15 to 20 minutes longer until top is browned.

CHA-CHA BEANS

4 cups cooked Great Northern or pinto beans (about two 16-ounce cans, rinsed), drained

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 tbsp. oil

4 slices bacon

1/4 cup Florence's Cha-Cha Sauce

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.

Fry bacon until crisp. Drain and crumble.

Fry bacon in oil.

In prepared baking dish, combine bacon, onion and beans. Bake in preheated oven 30 minutes.

Let cool 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with more sauce, if desired. Serve warm.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

THE VERY BEST COOKIES

1 cup (2 sticks) margarine (not soft type), at room temperature

1-1/2 cups granulated sugar

1 egg

1 tsp. vanilla

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. cream of tartar

2-1/2 cups flour

Colored sugar, granulated sugar or cinnamon-sugar, for coating

Using electric mixer on medium speed, beat margarine, sugar, egg and vanilla about 4 minutes until light and fluffy. Add baking soda, cream of tartar and flour. Blend on low speed just until fully combined.

Refrigerate dough in covered container at least 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Place colored sugar in resealable gallon-size plastic bag.

Roll some chilled dough into twelve 1-inch balls. Add dough balls, seal bag and toss balls until evenly coated. Place on prepared baking sheets. Repeat with remaining dough.

Bake in preheated oven about 10 minutes, just until cookies begin to turn slightly golden.

Note: Proportion of cinnamon to sugar can vary. A good starting point is 6 parts sugar to 1 part cinnamon

Makes about 7 dozen.

Opportunity is at hand.

See what's out there by posting your resume on St. Louis At Work, where you'll be matched with the most local jobs.

Learn more here. <http://splash.stltoday.com/stlouisatworkgetstarted/>

If you enjoy getting email about an interesting story, you might like the 3 O'Clock Stir from STLtoday.com.

Sign up and you'll receive an email with 5 unique stories of the day, every Monday-Friday, at no charge.

Sign up at <http://newsletters.stltoday.com>
